

Purple Line NOW! • Coalition for Smarter Growth • 1000 Friends of Maryland • Clean Water Action
Sierra Club • Prince George's ACT • Action Committee for Transit • Chesapeake Bay Foundation
Washington Area Bicyclist Association • CASA de Maryland

MEDIA RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Area Groups Applaud Maryland Gov. O'Malley for Purple Line Support

Light rail line will link housing and jobs in inner suburban Maryland, provide relief to commuters and strengthen the eastside of the region says broad coalition of environmental, smart growth, transit and bicycle advocates

(New Carrollton, MD) Area groups praised Maryland Governor Martin O'Malley today for announcing his support for the Purple Line as a 16-mile light rail transit project connecting the spokes of the Metrorail system in inner Prince George's and Montgomery Counties. The proposed light rail line is an important investment to give commuters better transit service, revitalize the region's inner suburban communities while protecting the Chesapeake Bay. The 16-mile light rail line will take 20,000 cars off the road and add 48,000 transit trips daily.

"Governor O'Malley has given us the leadership we need to keep Maryland and the region competitive. This is a visionary initiative to enhance our region's transportation choices while revitalizing key communities," said Cheryl Cort, Policy Director for the Coalition for Smarter Growth.

"Thanks to Gov. O'Malley for demonstrating Maryland's commitment to smart, green, transit-oriented development, which will revitalize our neighborhoods and protect and restore our creeks, rivers and the Bay," said Andrew Fellows, Chesapeake Regional Director, Clean Water Action.

"We agree that the Chesapeake Bay can be a significant beneficiary when the State focuses its efforts on obtaining efficient transit such as the Purple Line, and the kind of close-in, compact development that transit enables," said Kim Coble, Maryland Director for the Chesapeake Bay Foundation.

The Sierra Club Montgomery County group praised Gov. O'Malley's decision. "Once funded by the federal and state governments, this important transit link will help Maryland prepare for a new energy future and protect our climate. The Purple Line is a key part of the solution to stopping sprawl development and preserving Maryland's natural landscapes," said David Hauck, Sierra Club, Montgomery County group.

"We commend Governor O'Malley for his commitment to investing in Maryland's future. The Purple Line in suburban Maryland and the Red line in Baltimore will boost the State's competitive advantage for economic development while protecting the Bay and providing better transportation choices for Marylanders," said Jennifer Bevan-Dangel, 1000 Friends of Maryland.

This transit investment helps bicyclists and people who seek alternatives to driving. The rail project includes completing the trail from Bethesda to Silver Spring, long sought by area bicyclists and other trail users. “We are gratified to see Maryland move forward with this rail and trail project. The Purple Line provides better transportation choices and a key trail link for our region,” said Eric Gilliland, Executive Director, Washington Area Bicyclist Association.

Support for the Purple Line as a light rail line connecting downtown Bethesda to Silver Spring, Langley Park, College Park, Riverdale and New Carrollton is widespread across the region.

“We're thrilled with the governor's decision to move forward. It promises relief to thousands of commuters and the opportunity to build better communities for ourselves, our children, and our grandchildren,” said Ben Ross, President of Montgomery County-based Action Committee for Transit.

“Across our region, we recognize the value of the Purple Line, but it is especially important for connecting workers on the eastside to jobs on the west. Over time, this is a great opportunity to bring more jobs to Prince George’s County,” said Gustavo Torres, Executive Director of CASA de Maryland.

Karren Pope-Onwukwe, co-chair of the Prince George’s Advocates for Community-based Transit, commented: “I’m excited. We’ve been working on this for so long. At the federal level we now have an administration that understands the need for public transportation. At the state level, we have a Governor who understands how important this is to our communities. As our population ages we need more public transit. Everything is aligned for this to move forward.”

Harry Sanders, President of Purple Line NOW!, the regional advocacy coalition for the Purple Line commented, “This is a major advance towards securing federal funding, and getting this important rail link built. It’s now up to our Congressional delegation to ensure the funding is there.”

The long awaited transit line is now ready to seek federal funding. The groups are calling on the Washington, D.C. area Congressional delegation to secure the funding to begin the engineering phase of the project. Once funding is secured, the State anticipates construction to commence in 2014 and service to begin in 2017.

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